

**Is Najib the kind of friend Obama needs, asks Post
The Malaysian Insider
Sept 19, 2015**

Last December, on his holiday, US President Barack Obama invited Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to a round of golf in Hawaii, in a notable gesture of friendship for a foreign leader.

"Since then, however, Mr Najib has been evolving into an increasingly unseemly pal," says The Washington Post in an editorial.

Questioning the US president's friendship with Najib, the American newspaper catalogues a list of "unseemly" behaviour since that jaunt in the sun, ranging from the imprisonment of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim "on blatantly trumped-up charges, just under a year after the coalition Mr Anwar led won the popular vote in national elections" to the wielding of "a sedition law that Mr Najib once promised to repeal" against the opposition, to laughably prosecuting a cartoonist for tweets.

Then there are the allegations surrounding the transfer of US\$700 million into the prime minister's accounts and questions about the financial transactions and debts of 1Malaysia Development Bhd.

The Post notes that Najib's response to the questions and allegations was the retiring of deputy prime minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and the Attorney-General, among others, "the gutting" of PAC, and the suspension of The Edge. The list of dubious character references ends with the banning of Bersih 4's colour – yellow – and the recent "red shirt" rally and its racist overtones.

"Mr Najib once positioned himself as a reformer who would lead a quasi-authoritarian state to genuine democracy. Now he is trying to consolidate his position by appealing to the worst currents in Malaysian politics: ethnic chauvinism and Islamic fundamentalism," said the editorial.

President Obama will be visiting Malaysia in November. The US has been counting on Malaysia to support the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement.

The Post poses the question to the president that Nurul Izzah Anwar has been asking officials in the US: "For all that you are investing in Malaysia, are you getting your money's worth?"

The Post said Najib may cooperate with US intelligence agencies and its trade representative, but his repression and pandering to racists and Muslim extremists risks destroying the foundations of the alliance which Obama wants to forge.

"The next time Mr Obama meets his golfing buddy, he ought to make that clear." – September 19, 2015.

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